{See Note at end.}

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THEODORE PARKER.

PASSAGES FROM HIS WRITINGS, SELECTED BY ALBERT WALKLEY.

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THEODORE PARKER: A Sketch.

Theodore Parker, the Elijah of the Unitarian faith, was born at Lexington, Mass., Aug. 24, 1810. His parents were poor, so that they could not give their children the education they wished them to have. Theodore had therefore to push himself through the preparatory, college, and divinity courses. He entered Harvard in 1830, and graduated from the Divinity School in 1836. "His youth was full of ardor and hope, full of imagination and poetic dreams." In 1837 he was settled as pastor of the Unitarian Church in West Roxbury, Mass.; and from here his fame soon went abroad; his bold, strong voice was heard. His brethren in the ministry soon thought they detected heresy in him. His exchanges with them became, therefore, few in number. The German writers had great attraction for Parker; and these Germans were bold thinkers. An opportunity offered itself in Boston for him to give full vent to his ideas, and this he did in Hawes-Place Chapel, in an ordination sermon preached in 1841. This sermon, dealing with "The Transient and Permanent in Christianity," laid aside many things as transient which others in the Church believed to be permanent. This brought down on Parker the wrath of many. But soon he was called from West Roxbury to Boston, where he began preaching in Melodeon Hall. It was a cold morning in February, 1845, when he first spoke in this hall, but the audience in attendance was a large one. His discourses here clearly defined his position. He rejected as unhistorical many portions of canonical Scriptures; he renounced all belief in the supernatural, and used great freedom in defining Christianity. Soon Melodeon

Hall was not large enough. For "Parker was more than anything else a preacher. . . . . All that Parker had went into his preaching,—the wealth of his library, the treasures of his heart, the sweetness of his closet meditations, the solemnity of his lone musing." His congregation moved on November 14, 1852, into the great "Music Hall." And it is as preacher in this hall he is mostly remembered.

By his biographer his ministry is divided into "three periods." "The first was the period of quiet influence in West Roxbury. . . The second was the period at the Boston Melodeon. . . . This was the controversial epoch. The last period was that of the Music Hall, the famous period. There the faith was defined and formulated; the corner-stones were hewn and set." His faith is summed up in three cardinal points:

"The Absolute God,
The Moral Law,
The Immortal Life."

He said of himself, "I preached an idea of God, of man, and of religion, which commended itself to the nature of man." His was a democratic mind, so that he could speak to the level of the average mind. And in his highest flights of imagination, it is said, "he kept both his feet planted on the soil."

Parker desired liberty not only for himself but for all men, as his long, earnest and self-sacrificing work for the negro testifies. He fought sin in high places both in the church and out of it. The prophets of Baal found in him a persistent, outspoken opponent.

A prophecy of his is being fast fulfilled: "The religion I preach will be the religion of enlightened men for the next thousand years." He died at Florence, May 10, 1860. Among his last words were these: "There are two Theodore Parkers,—one dying in Italy, and the other I have planted in America."

Truth Against the World.

A Parable of Paul.

One day Abdiel found Paul at Tarsus, after his Damascus journey, sitting meek and thoughtful at the door of his house; his favorite books, and the instruments of his craft, being neglected beside him.

"Strange things I hear of you," said the sleek Rabbi. "You also have become a follower of the Nazarene! What course shall you pursue after your precious conversion?" "I shall go and preach the Gospel to all nations," said the new convert, gently. "I shall set off to-morrow."

The Rabbi, who felt a sour interest in Paul, looked at him with affected incredulity and asked, "Do you know the sacrifice you make? You must leave father and friends; the society of the Great and the Wise. You will fare hard and encounter peril. You will be impoverished; called hard names; persecuted; scourged; perhaps put to death." "None of these things move me," said Paul. "I have counted the cost. I value not life half so much as keeping God's Law, and proclaiming the truth, though all men forbid. I shall walk by God's light, and fear not. I am no longer a slave to the old Law of sin and death, but a free man of God, made free by the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus." "Here," rejoined the Rabbi, "you have ease, and fame; in your new work you must meet toil, infamy, and death." "The voice of God says, Go!" exclaimed the Apostle with firmness, "I am ready to spend and be spent in the cause of Truth." "Die then," roared the Rabbi, "like a Nazarene fool, and unbelieving Atheist, as thou art. He that lusts after new things, preferring his silly convictions, and that whim of a conscience, to solid ease, and the advice of his friends, deserves the cross. Die in thy folly. Henceforth I disclaim thee. Call me kinsman no more!"

Years passed over; the word of God grew and prevailed. One day it was whispered at Tarsus, and ran swiftly from mouth to mouth, in the market-place, "Paul, the apostate, lies in chains at Rome, daily expecting the Lions. His next trouble will be his last." And Abdiel said to his sacerdotal cronies in the synagogue, "I knew it would come to this. How much better to have kept to

his trade, and the old ways of his father and the prophets, not heeding that whim of a conscience. He might have lived respectably to an easy old-age at Tarsus, the father of sons and daughters. Men might have called him Rabbi in the streets."

Thus went it at Tarsus. But meantime, in his dungeon at Rome, Paul sat comforted. The Lord stood by him in a vision and said, "Fear not, Paul. Thou hast fought the good fight. Lo I am with thee to the end of the world." The tranquil old man replied, "I know whom I have served, and am thoroughly persuaded that God will keep what I have committed to him. I have not the spirit of fear, but of love, and a sound mind. I shall finish my course with joy, for I see the crown of Righteousness laid up for me, and now my salvation is more perfect, and my hope is higher than when I first believed."

Then in his heart spoke that voice, which had spoken before on the Mount of Transfiguration; "Thou also art my beloved Son. In thee am I well pleased."

"*Miscellaneous Writings,*" *chap. iv.*

Religion Intuitive.

This institution of Religion, like Society, Friendship, and Marriage, comes out of a principle, deep and permanent in the constitution of man. As humble, and transient, and partial institutions come out of humble, transient and partial wants, and are traced to the senses and the phenomena of life; so this sublime, permanent and universal institution came out from sublime, permanent, and universal wants, and must be referred to the Soul, the religious Faculty, and so belongs among the unchanging realities of life. Looking, even superficially, but with earnestness, upon human affairs, we are driven to confess that there is in us a spiritual nature, which directly and legitimately leads to Religion; that, as Man's body is connected with the world of Matter, rooted in it, has bodily wants, bodily senses to minister thereto, and a fund of external materials wherewith to gratify these senses and appease these wants; so Man's soul is connected with the world of Spirit, rooted in God, has spiritual wants, and spiritual senses, and a fund of materials wherewith to gratify these spiritual senses and appease these spiritual wants.

"*Discourse of Religion,*" *Book I., chap. i.*

We set aside the Body with its senses as the man's house, having doors and windows; we examine the Understanding, which is the handmaid; we separate the Affections which unite man with man; we discover the Moral Sense, by which we discern between right and wrong as by the body's eye between black and white, or night and day; and behind all these, and deeper down, beneath all the shifting phenomena of life we discover the Religious Element of Man. Looking carefully at this element; separating this as a cause from its actions, and these from their effects; stripping this faculty of all accidental circumstances peculiar to the age, nation, sect or individual, and pursuing a sharp and final analysis till the subject and predicate can no longer be separated, we find as the ultimate fact, that the religious element first manifests itself in our consciousness by a feeling of need, of want; in a word, by a Sense of Dependence.

"*Discourse of Religion,*" *Book I., chap. i.*

As we have bodily senses to lay hold on Matter and supply bodily wants, through which we obtain, naturally, all needed material things; so we have spiritual faculties to lay hold on God, and supply spiritual wants; through them we obtain all needed spiritual things. As we observe the conditions of the Body, we have Nature on our side; as we observe the Law of the Soul, we have God on our side. He imparts truth to all men who observe these conditions; we have direct access to Him through Reason, Conscience and the Religious Faculty, just as we have direct access to Nature through the eye, the ear, or the hand.

"*Discourse of Religion,*" *Book II., chap. viii.*

The Oneness of Religion.

Now there can be but one kind of Religion, as there can be but one kind of time and space. It may exist in different degrees, weak or powerful; in combination with other emotions, love or hate, with wisdom or folly, and thus it is superficially modified; just as Love, which is always the same thing, is modified by the character of the man who feels it, and by that of the object to which it is directed. Of course, then, there is no difference but of words between *revealed* Religion and *natural* Religion; for all actual Religion is revealed in us, or it could not be felt, and all revealed Religion is natural, or it would be of no use. What is of use to a man comes upon the plane of his consciousness, not merely above it, or below it. We may regard Religion from different points of view, and give corresponding names to our partial conceptions, which we have purposely limited, and so speak of natural and revealed Religion; Monotheistic, Polytheistic, or Pantheistic, Pagan, Jewish, Christian, Mahometan Religion. But in these cases the distinction, indicated by the terms, belongs to the thinker's mind, not to Religion itself, the object of thought.

"*Discourse of Religion*" *Book I., chap. iv.*

Power of Religion.

Out of the profoundest abyss in man proceed his worship, his prayer, his hymn of praise. The history of the world shows us what a space religion fills. She is the mother of philosophy and the arts; has presided over the greatest wars. She holds now all nations with her unseen hand; restrains their passions, more powerful than all the cunning statutes of the lawgiver; awakens their virtue; allays their sorrows with a mild comfort, all her own; brightens their hopes with the purple ray of faith, shed through the sombre curtains of necessity. Religious emotion often controls society, inspires the lawgiver and the artist,—is the deep-moving principle; it has called forth the greatest heroism of past ages; the proudest deeds of daring and endurance have been done in its name. Without Religion, all the sages of a kingdom cannot build a city; but with it, how a rude fanatic sways the mass of men. The greatest works of human art have risen only at Religion's call. The marble is pliant at her magic touch, and seems to breathe a pious life. The chiselled stone is instinct with a living soul, and stands there, silent, yet full of hymns and prayers, an embodied aspiration, a thought with wings that mock at space and time. The Temples of the East, the Cathedrals of the West; Altar and Column and Statue and Image—these are the tribute Art pays to her. Whence did Michael Angelo, Phidias, Praxiteles, and all the mighty sons of Art, who chronicled their awful thoughts in stone, shaping brute matter to a divine form, building up the Pyramid and Parthenon, or forcing the hard elements to swell into the arch, aspire into the dome or the fantastic tower,—whence did they draw their inspiration? All their greatest wonders are wrought in Religion's name. In the very dawn of time Genius looks through the clouds and lifts his voice in hymns and songs and stories of the Gods; and the Angel of Music carves out her thanksgiving, her penitence, her prayers for Man, on the unseen air, as a votive gift for her. Her sweetest note, her most majestic chant, she breathes only at Religion's call. Thus it has always been.

"*Discourse of Religion,*" *Book I., chap. iii.*

The End of Religion.

The legitimate and perfect action of the Religious Element takes place when it exists in harmonious combination with Reason, Conscience, and Affection. Then it is not Hatred, and not Fear, but Love before God. It produces the most beautiful development of human nature; the golden age, the fairest Eden of life,

the kingdom of Heaven. Its Deity is the God of Infinite Power, Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Holiness—Fidelity to Himself—within whose encircling arms it is beautiful to be. The demands it makes are to keep the Law He has written in the heart, to be good, to do good; to love men, to love God. It may use forms, prayers, dogmas, ceremonies, priests, temples, sabbaths, festivals, and fasts; yes, sacrifices, if it will, as means, not ends; symbols of a sentiment, not substitutes for it. Its substance is Love of God; its Piety the form; Morality the Love of men; its temple a pure heart; its sacrifice a divine life. The end it proposes is, to unite the man with God, till he thinks God's thought, which is Truth; feels God's feeling, which is Love, wills God's will, which is eternal Right; thus finding God in the sense wherein he is not far from any one of us; becoming one with Him, and so partaking of the divine nature.

"*Discourse of Religion,*" *Book I., chap. vii.*

God.

The Reason, spontaneously, independent of our forethought and volition, acting by its own laws, gives us by intuition an *Idea* of that on which we depend. To this idea we give the name of God or Gods. * * Outward circumstances furnish the occasion by which we approach and discover the Idea of God; but they do not furnish the Idea itself. That is a fact given by the nature of Man. Hence some philosophers have called it an innate idea; others, a reminiscence of what the spirit knew in a higher state of life, before it took the body. Both opinions may be regarded as rhetorical statements of the truth that the Idea of God is a fact given by Man's nature, and not an invention or device of ours. The belief in God's existence therefore is natural, not against nature. It comes unavoidably from the legitimate action of the intellectual and the religious faculties, just as the belief in light comes from using the eyes, and belief in our existence from mere existing. The knowledge of God's existence, therefore, may be called in the language of Philosophy, an Intuition of Reason.

"*Discourse of Religion,*" *Book I., chap. ii.*

There has been enough dogmatism respecting the nature, essence and personality of God; respecting the Metaphysics of the Deity, and that by men, who, perhaps, did not thoroughly understand all about the nature, essence, and metaphysics of Man. It avails nothing. Meanwhile, the greatest religious souls that have ever been are content to fall back on the Sentiment and Idea of God, and confess that none by searching can perfectly find Him out. They can say, therefore, with an old Heathen, "Since he cannot be fully declared by any one name, though compounded of never so many, therefore is he rather to be called by every name, he being both one and all things; so that, (to express the whole of God) either everything must be called by his name or he by the name of everything." "Call him, therefore," says another Pagan, "by all names, for all can express but a whisper of Him; call him rather by no name, for none can declare his Power, Wisdom, and Goodness."

"*Discourse of Religion,*" *Book II., chap. i.*

At the end of the Analysis, what is left? Being, Cause, Knowledge, Love, each with no conceivable limitation. To express it in a word, a being of Infinite Power, Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Holiness, Fidelity to himself. Thus by an analysis of the conception of God we find, in fact, or by implication, just what was given synthetically by the intuition of Reason. But do these qualities exhaust the Deity? Surely not. They only form our Idea of Him. It is idle, impious, in men to say the finite creature of yesterday can measure Him who is the All in All, the True, the Holy, the Good, the Altogether-Beautiful. * * * The finite approximates, but cannot reach, the Infinite.

"*Discourse of Religion,*" *Book II., chap. i.*

Immortality.

The doctrine that Man lives forever seems almost as general as the belief in a God. Like that, it comes naturally from an eternal desire in the human heart; a longing after the Infinite. In the rudest nations and the most civilized this doctrine appears. Perhaps there has been but a single form of Religion among civilized men under which it was not taught plainly and distinctly, and here it was continually implied. It seems we have by nature a sentiment of immortality; an instinctive belief therein. Rude nations, in whom instinct seems to predominate, trust the spontaneous belief.

"Discourse of Religion" Book I., chap. vi.

Immortality is what philosophers call an ontological fact; it belongs essentially to the being of man, just as the eye is a physiological fact and belongs to the body of man. To my mind this is the great proof of immortality: the fact that it is written in human nature; written there so plain that the rudest nations have not failed to find it, to know it; written just as much as form is written on the circle, and extension on matter in general. It comes to our consciousness as naturally as the notions of time and space. We feel it as a desire; we feel it as a fact. What is thus in man is writ there of God who writes no lies. To suppose that this universal desire has no corresponding gratification, is to represent Him, not as the father of all, but as only a deceiver. I feel the longing after immortality, a desire essential to my nature, deep as the foundation of my being; I find the same desire in all men. I feel conscious of immortality; that I am not to die; no, never to die, though often to change. I cannot believe this desire and consciousness are felt only to mislead, to beguile, to deceive me. I know God is my father, and the father of the nations. Can the Almighty deceive his children? For my own part I can conceive of nothing which shall make me more certain of my immortality. I ask no argument from learned lips. No miracle could make me more sure; no, not if the sheeted dead burst cerement and shroud, and rising forth from their honored tombs stood here before me, the disenchanted dust once more enchanted with that fiery life; no, not if the souls of all my sires since time began came thronging round, and with miraculous speech told me they lived and I should also live. I could only say, "I knew all this before, why waste your heavenly speech!" I have now indubitable certainty of eternal life. Death removing me to the next state, can give me infallible certainty.

"Occasional Sermons," Vol. I., sermon xiii.

There is a God of Infinite Perfection. The Soul of each man is destined to Eternal Life. These are the two greatest truths which human consciousness as yet has ever entertained. They are the most important; and if the human treasures of thought were to go to the ground and perish, all save what some few men grasped in their hand and fled off with, escaping from a new deluge, I should clutch these two truths as the most priceless treasure which the human race had won, and journey off with them to pitch my tent anew, and with these treasures build up a fresh and glorious civilization.

From "Idea of Immortal Life," in "Sermons on Theism."

Duty.

Without a moral faculty we could have no duties in respect to man; without a religious faculty, no duties in respect to God. The foundation of each is in Man, not out of him. If man have not a religious element in his nature, miraculous or other "revelations" can no more render him religious than fragments of sermons and leaves of the Bible can make a Lamb religious, when mixed and eaten with its daily food. The Law, the Duty, and the Destiny of Man, as of all God's creatures, are writ in himself, and by the Almighty's hand.

"Discourse of Religion," Book I., chap. iii.

Through these channels [Reason, Conscience and the Religious Faculty] and by means of a law, certain, regular, and universal as gravitation, God inspires men, makes revelation of his truth; for is not truth as much a phenomenon of God, as motion of Matter? Therefore, if God be omnipresent and omniactive, this inspiration is no miracle, but a regular mode of God's action on conscious Spirit, as gravitation on unconscious Matter. It is not a rare condescension of God, but a universal uplifting of Man. To obtain a knowledge of duty, a man is not sent away, outside of himself to ancient documents for the only rule of faith and practice; the Word is very nigh him, even in his heart, and by this word he is to try all documents whatever.

"Discourse of Religion," Book II., chap. viii.

O, young man, now in the period of the passions, reverence your Conscience. Defer that to no appetite, to no passion, to no foolish compliance with other men's ways, to no ungodly custom, even if become a law. Ask always, "Is it right for me?" Be brave and self-denying for conscience' sake. Fear not to differ from men; keeping your modesty, keep your integrity also. * * * The Flesh will come up with deceitful counsels; the Spirit, teaching the commandments of God; give both their due. Be not the senses' slave, but the soul's free man. O brother man, who once wert young, in the period of ambition, or beyond it, if such a time there be, can you trust the selfishness, the caprice, the passions, and the sin of men before your own conscience? * * O brother man, or old or young, how wilt thou dare come up before your God and say, "O Lord, I heard, I heard thy voice in my soul, at times still and small, at times a trumpet talking with me of the Right, the Eternal Right; but I preferred the low counsels of the flesh: * * Lo, here is the talent Thou gavest me, my sense of right. I have used each other sense, this only have I hid; it is eaten up with rust, but thus I bring it back to Thee. Take what is Thine!" Who would dare thus to sin against infinite Justice? Who would wish to sin against it, when it is also infinite Love, and the law of right is but the highway on which the Almightiness of the Father comes out to meet his prodigal?

From "The Function of Conscience," in "Speeches," etc., vol. ii.

We thank thee for this conscience, whereby face to face we commune with thine everlasting Justice. * * We thank thee for this conscience, with its power to know right, and its will to do right; and we bless thee that only thine own unchanging higher law of right can satisfy it, yearning for the first good, first perfect, and first fair. We thank thee that through this faculty we hold communion with thine everlasting righteousness, and can live by thy commandment, which is exceeding broad, and hath neither variableness nor the shadow of a turn.

"Prayers," xvii., xxiii.

False Notions of God and Religion.

There is little joy in the ecclesiastical consciousness of religion. Writers and preachers of Christianity commonly dwell on the dark side of human nature. * * "Man is a worm," they say. They do the same with God. They paint him as a king, not as a father; and as a king who rules by low and selfish means, for low and selfish ends, from low and selfish motives, and with a most melancholy result of his ruling. * He is painted as cruel, revengeful and without mercy—the grimmest of the gods. * They make religion a melancholy sort of thing, unnatural to man, which he would escape from if he dared or if he could. * It is not a joy but a burden, which some men are to be well and eternally paid for bearing in the heat of the mortal day. * Religion adorns her brow with yellow leaves smitten by the frost, not with rosebuds and violets.

From "Conscious Religion as a Source of Joy," in "Ten Sermons."

Man must try his hand on the soul, warping and twisting, tattooing and muti-

lating that also, coloring it with ochre, and gall-nuts of more astringent bite, and hanging barbaric pendants thereon. Attempts are made to interfere with the religious faculty, and give it a conventional direction ; to make it take on certain forms of human caprice, not human nature. Some monstrous fancy is adopted for the model man; then common men are clipped and pruned, and headed down, or bent in, and twisted into a resemblance to that type. Nay, men are thought to be religious, just as they conform to the unnatural abomination. "God likes none but the clipped spirit," quoth the priest. "No natural man for Him. Away with your whole men. Mutilation is the test of piety."

From "Conventional and Natural Sacraments," in "Ten Sermons."

The Scribes and Pharisees sat once in Moses' seat; now they go farther up and sit in the seat of the Messiah. * The Pharisee's faith is in the letter, not in the spirit. Doubt in his presence, that the Book of Chronicles and the Book of Kings are not perfectly inspired and infallibly true, on those very points where they are exactly opposite ; doubt that the Infinite God inspired David to denounce his enemies, Peter slay Ananias, Paul to predict events that never came to pass, * and he sets you down as an infidel, though you keep all the commandments from your youth up, lack nothing, and live as John and Paul prayed they might live. With him the unpardonable sin is to doubt that ecclesiastical doctrine to be true, which Reason revolts at, and Conscience and Faith spurn off with loathing. With him the Jews are more than the human race. The Bible is his Master, and not his Friend. * Had this Pharisee been born in Turkey, he would have been as zealous for the Mahometan Church, as he is for the Christian. It is only the accident of birth that has given him the Bible instead of the Koran, the Shaster, the Vedam, or the Shu-King. This person has no real faith in man, * no faith in God. * Yet this Pharisee speaks of God, as if he had known the Infinite from His boyhood; had looked over His shoulder when he laid the foundations of the earth.

From "The Pharisees," in "Miscellaneous Writings."

The popular clergy think miracles better than morality; and have even less justice than truth. They justify the popular sins in the name of God; are the allies of despotism in all its forms, military or industrial. Oppression by the sword, and oppression by capital successively find favor with them. In America there are two common ecclesiastical defences of African slavery: The negroes are the descendants of Ham, who laughed at his father Noah—overtaken with drink—and so it is right that Ham's children, four thousand years later, should be slaves to the rest of the world ; Slavery teaches the black men "our blessed religion." Such is ecclesiastical justice ; and hence judge the value of the churches to educate the conscience of mankind.

From "Justice and Conscience," in "Ten Sermons."

Man.

We bless thee for all periods of our life. We thank thee for the infancy, which is from thine own kingdom of heaven, cradled in love on earth; the little flower prophetic of other love that is to come, given not less than received, in the never-ending progress of the immortal soul. We thank thee for the period of the young man's and the young woman's life, when the body, unwonted to the experience of the world, runs over with the vernal energies of life's incipient years. We thank thee for the energy of passion and the power of soul, which thou givest us to tame this creature into wise and virtuous strength. We bless thee for the high hopes, the generous aspirations, and the quick and mounting instincts of the soul, which belong to the young man's life. We bless thee for the hardier vigor of the middle-aged, whom experience has made more wise, and we thank thee that frequent stumbling bids us take heed to our ways, and by many a failure and fall mankind is warned of the difficulties that beset his path. We thank thee for the

mighty power of will that can restrain passion in its instinctive swing, and hold ambition from its wicked aim, which else might mar and desolate the soul. We thank thee for the yet later period, when thou crownest the experienced head with silver hairs without, and within hivest up the manifold treasures of long-continued life. Father, we thank thee for the instinctive power of the young; the sober calculating strength of the middle-aged; and the long-treasured glories of old men, found in paths of righteousness, whose head is a lamp of white fire carried before us to warn us of the wrong and to guide thy children to ever-increasing heights of human excellence.

"*Prayers*," *x.*

Everything which God has made has a Right to be created from perfect motives, for a perfect purpose, from perfect material, and as perfect means; and a right also to be perfectly provided for. I know, to some men it will sound irreverent to speak of the Right of the created in relation to the Creator, and of the consequent Duty and Obligation of the Creator in relation to the created. But the Infinite God is infinitely just, and it is with the highest reverence that I ask, Shall not the God of all the earth do right? It is the highest reverence for the Creator to say that he gives his creatures a Right to Him, to Him as infinite Cause, to Him as infinite Providence; and I count it impious to say that God has a right to create even a worm from imperfect motives, for an imperfect purpose, of imperfect material, as imperfect means. * This lien on the infinity of God vests in the substance of their finite nature, and is not to be voided by any accident of their history, for that accident must have been known and provided for as one of the consequences of their powers. Each thing has the infinite perfection of God as guarantee to that right. God is security for the universe, and His hand is endorsed on every great and little thing which he has made, Then, if I am sure of God and his infinity, I am sure beforehand of the ultimate welfare of every thing which God has made, for the Infinite Father is the pledge and collateral security, the endorser therefor.

From "Speculative Theism," in "Sermons on Theism."

We thank thee that thou hast given us this immortal soul, which, feeding on the earth, grows for what is more than earthly, and with great hungering of heart reaches ever upwards for what is perfect, for what is good and beautiful and holy in thine own sight.

"*Prayers*," *vi.*

This passage from sin to salvation; this second birth of the Soul, as both Christians and Heathens call it, is one of the many mysteries of Man. Two elements meet in the consciousness. There is a negation of the past, an affirmation of the future. Terror and Hope, Penitence and Faith, rush together in that moment, and a new life begins. The character gradually grows over the wounds of sin. With bleeding feet the man retreads his way, but gains at last the mountain top of Life and wonders at the tortuous track he left behind.

"*Discourse of Religion*," *Book I., chap. vii.*

Jesus.

Chiefliest of all do we bless thee for that noble son of thine, born of a peasant mother and a peasant sire, who in days of great darkness went before men, his life a pillar of fire leading them unto marvellous light and peace and beauty. We thank thee for his words, so lustrous with truth, for his life, fragrant all through with piety and benevolence ; yea, Lord, we bless thee for the death which sinful hands nailed into his lacerated flesh, where through the wounds the spirit escaped triumphant unto thee, and could not be holden of mortal death. We thank thee for the triumphs which attend that name of Jesus; for the dear blessedness which his life has bestowed upon us, smoothing the pathway of toil, softening the pillow of distress, and brightening the way whereon truth comes down from thee, and life to thee ever goes ascending up. Father, we thank thee for the bless-

ings which this great noble soul has widely scattered throughout the world; and most of all for this, that his spark of fire has revealed to us thine own divinity enlivening this mortal human clod, and prophesying such noble future of achievement here on earth and in thine own kingdom of heaven with thee.

"Prayers," ix.

Christ is the Son of man; the manliest of men; humane as a woman; pious and hopeful as a prayer; but brave as man's most daring thought. He has led the world in morals and religion for eighteen hundred years, only because he was the manliest man in it; the humanest and bravest man in it, and hence the divinest. * * But the churches do not lead men therein, for they have not his spirit; neither that womanliness which wept over Jerusalem, nor that manliness which drew fire enough from heaven to light the world's altars for well-nigh two thousand years.

From "The True Idea of a Christian Church," in "Speeches," etc., vol. I.

He is the greatest person of the ages; the proudest achievement of the human race. He taught the absolute religion, love to God and man. That God has yet greater men in store, I doubt not; to say this is not to detract from the majestic character of Christ, but to affirm the omnipotence of God. When they come, the old contest will be renewed, the living prophet stoned, the dead one worshipped. Be that as it may, there are duties he teaches us far different from those commonly taught. He was the greatest fact in the whole history of man. Had he conformed to what was told him of men, had he counselled only with flesh and blood, he had been nothing but a poor Jew; the world had lost that rich endowment of religious genius, that richest treasure of religious life, the glad tidings of the one religion, absolute and true. What if he had said, as others, "None can be greater than Moses, none so great?" He had been a dwarf; the spirit of God had faded from his soul! But he conferred with God, not men; took counsel of his hopes, not his fears. Working for men, with men, by men, trusting in God, and pure as truth, he was not scared at the little din of church or state, and trembled not, though Pilate and Herod were made friends only to crucify him that was a born King of the world. Methinks I hear that lofty spirit say to you or me, "Poor brother, fear not, nor despair. The goodness actual in me is possible for all. God is near thee now as then to me; rich as ever in truth, as able to create, as willing to inspire. Daily and nightly He showers down his infinitude of light. Open thine eyes to see, thy heart to live. Lo, God is here."

From "The Relation of Jesus to his Age," in "Speeches," etc., vol. I.

If any one of the gospels, or if all of them, represent his thoughts correctly, then his theology contained a considerable mixture of error; which indeed is obvious to any man who will read those records without prejudice. With those records in our hands it would be absurd to maintain that Jesus entertained no theological error in matters of importance; that he had all theologic truth; or all the theologic truth known to any or all persons of his own time. From the time of Moses to Jesus there was a large intellectual and religious development of mankind, a marked progress in the religious sentiments, ideas and actions of individual men, and of the leading nations of mankind. From the time of Jesus to our own time this progress, both in individuals and in nations, has been more rapid. Old errors have been cast away, new truths have been added to the consciousness of mankind. * No man is so great as mankind. If the great genius at first is so far before his brothers as to be incomprehensible, by and by they overtake him, pass by him, and go still farther on till they become incomprehensible to the man who stands where the genius once stood. * * Every great genius for religion will add new facts to the world's experience of religion, just as much since the death of Jesus as before his time. The road is made easier after a saint has trod it, and no saint travels the whole length therof.

From "The Popular Theology" in "Sermons on Theism."

Come to the plain words of Jesus of Nazareth [and] Christianity is a simple thing; very simple. It is absolute, pure Morality; absolute, pure Religion; the love of man; the love of God, acting without let or hindrance. The only creed it lays down is the great truth which springs up spontaneous in the holy heart—there is a God. Its watchword is, be perfect as your Father in Heaven. The only form it demands is a divine life; doing the best thing, in the best way, from the highest motives; perfect obedience to the great law of God. Its sanction is the voice of God in your heart; the perpetual presence of Him, who made us and the stars over our head; Christ and the Father abiding in us. All this is very simple; a little child can understand it; very beautiful, the loftest mind can find nothing so lovely.

From "the Transient and Permanent in Christianity," in "Miscellaneous Writings."

Inspiration and the Bible.

God's action on Matter and on Man is perhaps the same thing to Him, though it appear differently modified to us. But it is plain from the nature of things, that there can be but one kind of Inspiration, as of Truth, Faith, or Love: it is the direct and intuitive perception of some truth, either of thought or of sentiment. There can be but one mode of Inspiration: it is the action of the Highest within the soul, the divine presence imparting light; this presence as Truth, Justice, Holiness, Love, infusing itself into the soul, giving it new life; the breathing in of the Deity; the incoming of God to the Soul, in the form of Truth through the Reason, of Right through the Conscience, of Love and Faith through the Affections and Religious Element. Is Inspiration confined to theological matters alone? Most surely not. Is Newton less inspired than Simon Peter?

"Discourse of Religion," Book II. ,chap. viii.

The Christian man or the Christian Church is to stop at no man's limitation; at the limit of no book. God is not dead, nor even asleep, but awake and alive as ever of old; He inspires men now no less than beforetime; is ready to fill your mind, heart and soul with truth, love, life, as to fill Moses and Jesus, and that on the same terms; for inspiration comes by universal laws, and not by partial exceptions. Each point of spirit, as each atom of space, is still bathed in the tides of Deity.

From "The True Idea of a Christian Church," in "Speeches," etc.. vol. I.

Take the Bible for what is true in it, and the first chapter of Genesis is a grand hymn of creation, a worthy prelude of the sublime chants that follow. It sings this truth: The World was not always; is not the work of chance, but of the living God; all things are good, made to be blessed. * The sweet notes of David's prayer; his mystic hymn of praise, so full of rippling life; his lofty Psalm, which seems to unite the warbling music of the wind, the sun's glance, and the rush of the lightning; which calls on the mountain and the sea, and the beast, and bird, and man, to join his full heart,—all these shall be sweet and elevating, but we shall leave his pernicious curse to perish where it fell. * Little needs now be said of the New Testament, of the simple truth that rustles in its leaves, its parables, epistles, where Paul lifts up his manly voice, and John, or whoso wrote the words, pours out the mystic melody of his faith. Why tell the deep words of Jesus? Have we exhausted their meaning? The world—has it outgrown Love to God and Man? They still act in gentle bosoms, giving strength to the strong, and justice and meekness and charity and faith to beautiful souls, long tried and oppressed. There is no need of new words to tell of this.

"Discourse of Religion," Book IV., chap. v.

There are religious books, such as waken the soul by their direct action—stirring us to piety, stirring us to morality—books in which men of great religious growth have garnered up the experience of their life. * There are not many such in the world. There are few masterpieces of poetry in all the earth; a boy's schoolbag would hold them all. * The master-

pieces of piety in literature are the rarest of all. In a mineralogist's cabinet what bushels there are of quartz; * only here and there an emerald; and diamonds are exceeding rare. So it is with the gems of holy thought. Some psalms are there from the Bible, * now and then an oracle from a Hebrew prophet. But the most quickening of all religious literature is still found in the first three Gospels of the New Testament—in those dear beatitudes, in occasional flowers of religion—parable and speech. * Other religious books there are precious to the heart of man. Some of the works of Augustine, of Thomas a Kempis, of Fenelon, of Jeremy Taylor, of John Bunyan, of William Law have proved exceeding dear to pious men throughout the Christian world. In a much narrower circle of readers, Buckminster, Channing, and Ware have comforted the souls of men. Herbert and Watts have here and there a "gem of purest ray serene," [and] the religious influence of Wordsworth's poetry has been truly great. * A writer of our own time, with large genius and unfaltering piety, adorning a little village of New England with his fragrant life, has sent a great religious influence to many a house in field and town, and youths and maids rejoice in his electric touch. I will leave it to posterity to name his name,—the most original, as well as religious of American writers.

From "The Culture of the Religious Powers," in "Ten Sermons."

From behind this dark and thundering cloud of the popular theology, how beautiful comes forth the calm, clear light of natural human religion, revealing God as the Infinite Father, as the Infinite Mother of all, perfectly powerful, perfectly wise, perfectly just and loving, and perfectly holy too! Then how beautiful is the Universe! It is the great Bible of God;—Material Nature is the Old Testament, millions of years old, spangled with truths under our feet, sparkling with glories over our head; and Human Nature is the New Testament from the Infinite God, every day revealing a new page as Time turns over the leaf. * And over the whole—Old Testament and New Testament—the Infinite Loving-Kindness of God the Father, comes brooding down as a bird over her nest, aye, taking us to His own infinite arms and blessing us with Himself.

From "The Popular Theology," in "Sermons on Theism."

Sunday, and The Church.

I am not one of those who wish "to give up the Sunday,"—indeed there are few such men amongst us. I would make it yet more useful and profitable. I would remove from it the superstition and the bigotry which has so long been connected with it; I would use it freely, as a Christian not enslaved by the letter of Judaism, but made free by an obedience to the law of the spirit of life. I would use the Sunday for religion in the wide sense of the word; use it to promote piety and goodness, for humanity, for science, for letters, for society. I would not abuse it by impudent license on the one hand, nor by slavish superstition on the other. We can easily escape the evils which come of the old abuse; can make Sunday ten times more valuable than it is even now; can employ it for all the highest interests of mankind, and fear no reaction into libertinism.

The Sunday is made for man, as are all other days; not man for the Sunday. Let us use it, then, not consuming its hours in a Jewish observance; not devote it to the lower necessities of life, but the higher; not squander it in idleness, sloth, frivolity or sleep; let us use it for the body's rest, for the mind's culture, for head and heart and soul.

From "Thoughts on the most Christian Use of Sunday," in "Speeches," etc., vol. I.

The church that is to lead this century will not be a church creeping on all fours; mewling and whining, its face turned down, its eyes turned back. It must be full of the brave manly spirit of the day, keeping also the good of times past. There is a terrific energy in this age, for man was never so much developed, so much the master of himself before. Great truths, moral and political, have come to light. They fly quickly. The iron prophet

of types publishes his visions of weal or woe, to the near and far. This marvellous age has invented steam and the magnetic telegraph, apt symbols of itself, before which the miracles of fable are but an idle tale. It demands, as never before, freedom for itself, usefulness in its institutions, truth in its teachings, and beauty in its deeds. Let a church have that freedom, that usefulness, truth and beauty, and the energy of this age will be on its side. But the church which did for the fifth century, or the fifteenth, will not do for this. What is well enough at Rome, Oxford or Berlin, is not well enough for Boston. It must have our ideas, the smell of our ground, and have grown out of the religion in our soul. The freedom of America must be there before this energy will come; the wisdom of the nineteenth century, before its science will be on the churches' side. * * A church that believes in inspiration now will appeal to God; try things by reason and conscience; aim to surpass the old heroes; baptize its children with a new spirit; and, using the present age, will lead public opinion, and not follow it. * * Let us have a church that dares imitate the heroism of Jesus; seek inspiration as he sought it; judge the past as he; act on the present like him; pray as he prayed; work as he wrought; live as he lived. Let our doctrines and our forms fit the soul, as the limbs fit the body, growing out of it, growing with it. Let us have a church for the whole man: truth for the mind; good works for the hands; love for the heart; and for the soul that aspiring after perfection, that unfaltering faith in God which, like lightning in the clouds, shines brightest when elsewhere it is most dark. Let our church fit man, as the heavens fit the earth.

From "The True Idea of a Christian Church," in "Speeches," etc., vol. I.

Gold Dust from "The World of Matter and The World of Man."

Every rose is an autograph from the hand of the Almighty God.

Not a lichen scars the rock, not a star flames in the sky, but it tells of the infinite loveliness and of the infinitely loving God.

The world is witness continually to power, to never-failing law, to mind that is everywhere; is witness to that ever-present Power which men call God. Look up, and reverence; bow down, and trust!

No little worm is turned away unfed from that dear Father's board where the trencher is set and all things made ready for the ephemeron, born this minute, and to perish the next hour.

Be not familiar with the idea of wrong, for sin in fancy mothers many an ugly fact.

No lamentations of Jeremiah are to me so sad as the literature of pleasure. It is well to be ascetic sooner than waste life in idle joys. The earnestness of life is the only passport to the satisfaction of life.

The whole sum and substance of human history may be reduced to this maxim—that when man departs from the divine means of reaching the divine end, he suffers harm and loss.

The first duty which God demands of men is that they be faithful, each man to his own nature, and each woman to hers, to respect it, to discipline it to its proper manner, and to use it in well-proportioned life. If I fail in that, I fail in everything besides. Gain what else I may, the gain is of small consequence; I have lost my own soul.

Beautiful is the morning of love with its prophetic crimson, violet, saffron, purple, and gold, with its hopes of days that are to come. Beautiful also is the evening of love, with its glad remembrances, and its rainbow side turned towards heaven as well as earth.

Religion is majestic in the state; it may be grand in the church. But piety looks lovelier and sweeter at home; not arrayed in her court dress, not set off in

her church regimentals, but dressed in her homely week-day, work-day clothes.

Out of the common events of life, out of the passions put by God into your hearts, you may paint on the walls of your life the fairest figures, angels and prophets. Out of the common stones of your daily work you may build yourself a temple which shall shelter your head from all harm, and bring down on you the inspiration of God.

There never was a great truth but it got reverenced; never a great institution, nor a great man, that did not, sooner or later, receive the reverence of mankind.

A man gets a new truth, a new idea of justice, a new sentiment of religion, and it is a seed out of the flower of God, something from the innate substance of the Infinite Father; for truth, justice, love, and faith in the bosom of man are higher manifestations of God than the barren zone of yonder sun, fairer revelations of him than the brave grandeur of yonder sky.

I love God as I can no other being —father, mother, wife, child; my love to him transcends them all. It is reverence, it is gratitude, it is adoration, it is trust; my being melts into his and the two are one. All selfishness is gone, and in the life of God within my consciousness do I find my own higher life.

O Lord, our Father and our Mother too, we know that we need not ask any good thing from thee, nor in our prayer beseech thee to remember us; for thou lovest us more than we can love ourselves, and art more desirous of our infinite welfare than we for our prosperity a single day. We pray thee therefore that ourselves may be faithful to all the gifts which thou hast given us.

"*Prayers,*" *xxxvii.*

The punctuation given above is quite closely that of Parker himself. "There is a good deal of the man in his punctuation and capitals. Let Parker have his own Rhetoric as he had his own Theology."

The best "Life of Theodore Parker" is by O. B. Frothingham, but the larger one by Weiss holds much more of his correspondence. Several short "Lives" have appeared in England,—Reville's, Dean's, Miss F. E. Cooke's; and the last, written for young people, has been reprinted here. A Sunday School Manual called "Theodore Parker, and the Liberal Movement in America," is published by the Western Unitarian Sunday School Society, 135 Wabash Ave., Chicago. (15 cents.)

The most nearly complete edition of his works is that in fourteen volumes, edited by Frances Power Cobbe, and published in London by Trubner & Co. The four volumes oftenest found in American editions are the "Discourse of Religion" (Putnams, New York, $1.50); the "Prayers" (Roberts Bros., Boston, $1.00); "Lessons from the World of Matter and the World of Man" (Colegrove Book Co., Chicago, $1.20); and "Historic Americans." The other books would probably be reprinted, should call for them arise. But the best single volume to own will doubtless be the book of selections from Parker's religious writings, to be published this fall (1885) by the American Unitarian Association.

*** Published Semi-Monthly (except during July and August), by The Colegrove Book Co., 135, Wabash Ave., Chicago, Ill. Ten copies or more to one address, each, 50 cts. a year. Single copy, one year, $1.00. Entered at the Chicago Post-Office as second-class matter.

Our "Church-Door Pulpit" hints its purpose in its name. It aims to furnish fortnightly a transfigured tract,—transfigured by being paid for, and by representing not so much a given system of beliefs as the emphasis, in somewhat varying beliefs, on "Freedom, Fellowship and Character in Religion;" this tract to be taken from the rack or table at the church-door to the home, there to serve its little mission by reading in the family, lending to a neighbor, mailing to a distant friend, etc. We hope the plan may be destined to wide adoption by Liberal churches as part of their regular church-work.

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